REMARKS

Claims 1-3 and 5-14 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-3 and 5-14 are amended and claim 4 is cancelled. Support for the amendments to claim 1 can be found in original claims 4 and 13, and page 12, lines 31-34.

Claims 1-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0108753 to Bruderick et al. (Bruderick). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites a protuberance and a body being molded in a single part, and a frangible zone that is a thinned zone having a thickness that is less than the body and the front wall, the rear wall and the third wall of the protruberance.

Bruderick discloses a fender support system 130 that includes fender supports 120, and sill to fender brackets 110 (paragraph [0035]), molded in carbon fiber SMC (paragraph [0036]). The sill to fender brackets 110 are preferably molded separately from the fender supports 120 and assembled to the supports 120 (paragraphs [0038]-[0039]). The elements 110, 120 can also be molded in a single part (paragraph [0037]). The support system 130 comprising the elements 110 and 120 is assembled to the vehicle body 420 via an interface 405 (paragraph [0041]).

The Office Action asserts that Bruderick's fender support 120 is an upper beam of the chassis of the vehicle. The Office Action also asserts that Bruderick's element 240 is the body of the support element. However, such an element is not shown in Fig. 5 or referenced in the specification.

The Office Action also asserts that the interface 405 that connects the sill to fender brackets 110 to the vehicle body 420 is the fragible zone. However, the fender supports 120 are part of the support system 130 and are not part of the vehicle. The fender supports 120 thus constitutes the body of the support fender. Furthermore, Bruderick does not disclose

how the sill to fender brackets 110 are connected to the fender supports 120 when these elements are molded in a single part. As stated above, Bruderick does not provide any detail about how the elements are molded in a single part (paragraph [0037]). Bruderick also does not disclose that the elements 110, 120 are linked to a frangible zone, such a zone being a thinned zone thinner than the elements 110, 120.

It is not proper to assert that, in Bruderick's Fig. 3, the zone linking the elements 110, 120 is thinner than the walls of these elements 110, 120 because these elements 110, 120 are not molded in a single piece and are instead assembled by rivets, for example (paragraph [0038]). The zone linking the two elements 110, 120 therefore comprises the walls of the element 110, 120, which are superposed. Moreover, there is no zone in Bruderick's Fig. 3 that is thinner than the walls of the protuberance.

The interface 405, considered by the Office Action as forming such a zone, is in fact used to connect the support system 130 of the support fender to the vehicle body 420 when the elements 110, 120 of the support system 130 are already assembled. Therefore, it does not connect the two elements 110, 120 of the support system 130 together. It is moreover not disclosed in Bruderick that this element is molded in a single part with the support system 130, or that it constitutes a thinned zone.

Bruderick thus fails to disclose a protuberance and a body being molded in a single part, and a frangible zone that is a thinned zone having a thickness that is less than the body and the front wall, the rear wall and the third wall of the protruberance, as recited in claim 1. Bruderick also fails to identify any advantage associated with these features (i.e., avoiding or reducing the injuries of a pedestrian after a shock between the pedestrian and the vehicle). Bruderick thus fails to provide any disclosure or suggestion to provide the above features of claim 1, or the additional features recited in the dependent claims.

It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Bruderick in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,736,434 to Anderson et al. (Anderson). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Anderson fails to overcome the deficiencies of Bruderick as applied to independent claim 1. Anderson discloses a bumper fascia 24 attached to a beam 20, but neither the beam 20 nor the bumper assembly is a front fender support or presents a protuberance as recited in claim 1. Anderson also fails to identify any advantage that can be achieved by the combination of features recited in claim 1 (i.e., avoiding or reducing the injuries of a pedestrian after a shock between the pedestrian and the vehicle).

Applicants also traverse the rejection of dependent claim 13, which depends from independent claim 1 and is thus allowable for the same reasons as claim 1.

Anderson disclose a beam 20 for a fascia assembly 26, which fascia assembly 26 is molded because of a molding process (col. 4, lines 25-30 and lines 55-67). Anderson therefore does not disclose a method for molding a support of a front fender but a method for molding a bumper fascia.

Anderson discloses the following steps during the molding process (col. 6, lines 57 to col. 7, line 30):

heating a sheet of fascia material 90,

inserting the sheet in a mold 30 and closing the mold 30 so that it maintains the sheet,

deforming the sheet, so that it is in contact with a face of the mold 30,

injecting the foam material in a cavity of the mold 30, and

moving a part of the mold 30 towards the other part of the mold 30 to crush the foam material.

Anderson does not disclose that the mold comprises a discharge passage as recited in claim 13. The cavity 50 that the Office Action considers as the discharge passage is the molding cavity as can be seen from the drawings and understood from the specification (col. 5, lines 23-30). Anderson also does not disclose that the cavity 50 comprises a portion corresponding to a thinned portion.

Moreover, Anderson's method does not comprise a step that provides the molding chamber with more molding paste than necessary. Anderson does not disclose that the moving part is moved so that the molding paste flows between fixed and movable parts of the mold and to discharge a surplus of molding paste through the discharge passage. Indeed, the movable part of Anderson's mold 30 is moved, but this step is performed to increase the density of the foam (col. 7, lines 15-20), the totality of the foam being kept in the molding cavity to this end. Consequently, all of the features of claim 13 are not disclosed or suggested in Anderson. These features are not either disclosed or suggested in Bruderick, which does not disclose the manufacturing process of the support system 130.

Therefore, the combination of Bruderick and Anderson fails to suggest all of the features of claims 1-14. It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

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